

## **Response to the Tsunami Disaster**

### **Update: January 19, 2005**

Describing the disaster's aftermath in Indonesia in a recent interview, Secretary Powell said Banda Aceh (in northern Sumatra) looked like "a place that had just been hit by a nuclear weapon." Rebuilding communities and lives will take years, he said, and each country's recovery will be different. Lives lost are estimated at 156,000.

Committed U.S. Government humanitarian assistance now approaches \$100 million, out of a pledged \$350 million (excluding U.S. Department of Defense contributions). USAID is the primary provider of assistance on behalf of the American people. In India, on-the-ground recovery initiatives are valued at \$2.8 million (and will reach \$3.8 million shortly). As the immediate relief phase winds down, USAID India – with donor colleagues and government officials – are assessing longer-term recovery and rehabilitation needs.

### **India Field Report**

From January 14 – 17, USAID India Acting Mission Director Bill Martin traveled with other USAID staff and the disaster assistance response team to India's hardest hit state of Tamil Nadu. The delegation met with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local government officials to share information and coordinate response priorities. The group observed relief activities and visited tsunami-affected towns and villages. Relief work-in-progress (supported by the USG) focuses on constructing temporary residential camps with adequate shelter, clean water and sanitation systems for victims. Expanded efforts to rebuild livelihoods and transition people back to normal life are getting underway.

Gathering information and assessing needs for the next phase of recovery was of high interest to the visitors. Potential areas for longer-term initiatives include Indo-U.S. community partnerships to share technology and know-how on disaster preparedness and city town management; local-level disaster preparedness; livelihood options (especially credit or microfinance for fishing and other industries); and permanent shelters. The team discussed recovery priorities with the Special Relief Commissioner for Tamil Nadu. Adoptions for orphaned children are under strict control, according to the Commissioner – an essential measure to mitigate exploitation of these very vulnerable people.

The Government of India estimates disaster damage costs in the Andaman and Nicobar Island territory at more than \$450 million. UNICEF is now giving measles vaccinations in the territory; it is the first international aid agency allowed in the restricted area. USAID India continues to monitor the situation.

### **Humanitarian Assistance to India to Date**

- \$900,000 – for a "cash-for-work" program led by World Vision India to construct 2,500 temporary shelters and give families an opportunity to earn money;

- \$400,000 – to Project Concern International, India, for recovery and rehabilitation in four villages (temporary shelters, livelihood options, "cash-for-work" disaster clean-up, and child day care centers);
- \$650,000 to CARE (India), and \$750,000 to Catholic Relief Services (India) – for water and sanitation;
- \$50,000 – for emergency relief by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund; and
- \$50,000 – for emergency relief implemented by the Indian Red Cross.

USAID expects to sign four more relief grants shortly, totaling \$1 million.

### **Staying Informed, and How to Help**

For more about USAID India efforts, go to [www.usaid.gov/in](http://www.usaid.gov/in) . For region-wide news, and advice on how to contribute to relief efforts, go to [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov), and click on "Tsunami Relief."

--Kristen Kelleher, USAID India Communications Officer